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## Current Opinion

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### The Jewish Passover as Celebrated Today

Having witnessed the Passover celebration at the homes of rabbis in Jerusalem and Germany, Volz (in the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1906, pp. 247-51) sketches the manner of its observance. All the family and the guests gather in the living-room, suitably decorated for the occasion. A covered cup of wine stands on the table, ready for the still expected Elijah. The head of the family puts on a white garment and takes his seat at the head of the table, upon which the dishes composing the meal are placed: unleavened cakes, an egg, a chicken bone, a bowl of sauce, a vessel of salt water and one of vegetables; each representing some phase in the experience of Israel.

Every grown person present has a printed liturgy and a wine cup before him (there is no common cup), and the service begins with the Kiddush (which includes the thanksgiving for the fruit of the vine) and the drinking of the first cup. After blessing and eating a portion of the vegetable (the fruit of the earth), and breaking and setting aside some of the unleavened bread, the second cup is poured out. The youngest present inquires the reason of the observance, and is told of the exodus. A eulogy and explanation of the festival is then chanted by all, the head of the house leading. All lift up their cups and sing the beginning of the Hallel (Pss. 113, 114), after which they give thanks for the fruit of the vine, and drink the second cup, leaning on the left side.

All then wash their hands, and after another blessing, partake of the unleavened cakes and the vegetable, which is first dipped in the sauce. With this the historical part of the meal ends. A merry supper follows, lasting two hours, after which the third cup is poured and, after praises and petitions, is drunk. After the pouring of the fourth cup, the song of praise is very beautifully sung (Pss. 115-18, 136). Other prayers follow; then the fourth cup is drunk, with a thanksgiving; and the whole concludes with a prayer for the rebuilding of the temple "in our days."

### The Life of Jesus and the Teaching of Paul

That Paul, who recognizes Jesus as his Lord, and who cannot find language too strong to express the completeness of his allegiance to him, should make so little use as he does of the teachings of Jesus, and of the facts of his life, to substantiate his own teachings is a paradox which not

now for the first time, but recently more than formerly, has attracted the attention of scholars and led to investigation with a view to its explanation. Such explanation cannot be found in a contrariety of thought between Paul and Jesus. For whatever differences in details there may be, the religion of Jesus as we learn it from either the Synoptists or from John, and the religion of Paul as reflected in his epistles, are in their fundamentals the same. In a recent issue of the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (VII, 2) M. Brückner, who recently published a book on the origin of the Pauline Christology, returns to the discussion of the subject.

Brückner's thesis is that the agreement between the teachings of Jesus and those of Paul in such matters as theology, eschatology, and ethics is due to their common agreement with current Jewish views; but that the more essential fact is that "Paul, in entire independence of Jesus, presented to the Greeks in his gospel of Christ, the deepest content of that which Jesus in his person brought to mankind."

That there is a large element of truth in this general statement can hardly be denied. In Jesus the *life*, the personality, is of capital importance; in Paul, the doctrine. The two are in essential agreement in the conception of religion which they convey. Both are conditioned in a measure by current Judaism. Paul does, despite his enthusiastic devotion to and exaltation of Christ, develop his system of thought to an astounding degree in independence of the life and the teaching of Jesus. It is not impossible, as Brückner affirms, that he had in some respects incorrect notions concerning the facts of Jesus' life. But we are persuaded that Brückner quite overstates the matter when he affirms that Paul develops his views in entire independence of Jesus. Paul's own letters show that while to him the heavenly Christ was the supreme object of his devotion and the center of his thought, yet he clearly identified the heavenly with the historical Jesus, in the sense that the former was the latter—crucified, risen from the dead, and seated at the right hand of God; and that, furthermore, he had opportunities to acquire knowledge concerning the life and teachings of Jesus from those who had personally known him; and still further, that he possessed some such knowledge. The small amount of it that appears in his letters is indeed surprising, and the fact is of no little significance; but there is more reason to affirm that he must have possessed more than he actually mentions in his letters, than to affirm that he developed his gospel wholly independently of Jesus.